

Mayor of London pledges international support to help Sarajevo tackle life-threatening air pollution

- **Global programme, adopted in over 50 cities worldwide, supports mayors to implement policies that rapidly reduce air pollution while improving public health and climate resilience**
- **Commitments made through the programme are projected to save 450,000 lives and generate USD 844 billion in economic benefits by 2040**
- **Bosnia has the fifth-highest mortality rate from air pollution globally and is consistently ranked among the countries with the worst air quality in the world.**
- **Sadiq offers Sarajevo its first international technical support and expertise to tackle life-threatening air pollution**

The Mayor of London and Co-Chair of C40 Cities, Sadiq Khan, met with the mayor of Sarajevo and the Prime Minister of Sarajevo Canton to discuss the shared challenge of air pollution and how cities can work together to accelerate action to improve air quality, protect public health and save lives.

Bosnia has the fifth-highest mortality rate from air pollution globally and is consistently ranked among the countries with the worst air quality in the world. About 3,300 people are estimated to die early each year from particle pollution in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Sarajevo, pollution levels frequently rise to dangerous levels during the winter months, driven by factors including domestic heating, traffic emissions and the city's geographical setting. Poor air quality increases the risk of heart and lung disease, stroke, respiratory illness and premature death, while also placing pressure on health services and reducing the quality of life for residents.

Throughout the winter, Sarajevo's population is regularly told to avoid outdoor exposure and remain indoors with minimal ventilation. Flights are also often cancelled or diverted, causing significant economic and personal ramifications for the city.

The meeting provided an important opportunity for London and Sarajevo to exchange expertise and explore how international collaboration can support faster progress in tackling one of the world's most pressing public health challenges. As Co-Chair of C40 Cities, Mayor Khan offered the support available through the C40 Cities network, including the opportunity for Sarajevo to engage with the C40 air quality programme.

This is the first time Sarajevo will have access to the kind of dedicated international technical assistance and peer support available through the C40 network. Participation in C40's air quality programme would provide the city with tailored expertise to help identify the most effective interventions and accelerate progress towards cleaner air.

The programme helps cities accelerate action on air pollution through access to world-leading technical expertise, peer-to-peer learning, air quality modelling tools, training and international best practice. Participation would enable Sarajevo to draw on the experience of cities around the world that have successfully reduced emissions while improving public health and quality of life.

As cities around the world face growing pressure to address pollution and its impacts on public health this meeting reaffirmed the commitments of London and Sarajevo to reduce emissions and bring forward initiatives that will save lives and make their cities better places to live and work. It also highlighted the important role cities can play in sharing knowledge and working together to tackle one of the world's biggest public health challenges.

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Mayor of London and Co-Chair of C40 Cities, Sadiq Khan, said: "Clean air is something that unites us all. No matter where we live or our background, everyone deserves the right to breathe safe, clean air. It was a pleasure to meet with the mayor of Sarajevo and the Prime Minister of Sarajevo Canton to discuss the challenges our cities face from toxic air and how collaboration between cities can help deliver solutions. Through the C40 network, cities can learn from one another, share best practice and access practical support to accelerate action."

Mayor of Sarajevo, Samir Avdić, said: "The air pollution crisis in Sarajevo is one of the most significant challenges to public health and the quality of life of its residents. During certain periods of the year, air pollution levels exceed recommended international health guidelines, highlighting the need for continuous measures to improve air quality. By strengthening cooperation with London and the C40 Cities network, Sarajevo can exchange experience and best practices in reducing transport-related emissions, improving air quality in urban areas, and creating cleaner, healthier and more sustainable communities for all citizens."

Prime Minister of Sarajevo Canton, Nihad Uk, said: "Toxic air pollution does not recognise administrative boundaries, which is why cooperation between neighbouring cities and international partners is so important. Today's meeting demonstrates our shared commitment to finding practical solutions, exchanging knowledge and working together to create a healthier environment for everyone who lives and works in our region."

Executive Director of C40 Cities, Mark Watts, said: "We're pleased to be connecting with Sarajevo for the first time as the city steps up its efforts to tackle air pollution. Through the C40 air quality programme, Sarajevo would be able to access world-leading expertise and the experience of cities that are already delivering cleaner air for their residents. We look forward to connecting with Sarajevo to accelerate progress towards safe air and a healthier, more resilient future."

Launched by C40 Cities to help cities move faster on clean air, the Clean Air Accelerator supports mayors to implement policies that rapidly reduce air pollution while improving public health and climate resilience. The Accelerator has now been adopted by 51 cities worldwide.

Collectively, commitments made through the Accelerator are projected to save 450,000 lives and generate USD 844 billion in economic benefits by 2040. Cities are also increasingly integrating clean air policies with broader goals around equity, sustainable transport, energy affordability and public health.

Notes to Editors

Elected C40 Chair in 2021, Sadiq Khan has spent five years turning a global network of the world's largest cities - representing 920 million people and 23% of the world's economy - into a delivery machine for local climate action.

On air quality, he built the global standard. His expansion of [London's Ultra Low Emission Zone \(ULEZ\)](#) to all 32 boroughs as mayor of London brought cleaner air to 5 million more Londoners and became the model for C40 cities. He also launched [Breathe Cities](#) with Michael R. Bloomberg, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions and founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies. Breathe Cities is a global clean air initiative delivered by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clean Air Fund and C40 Cities, combining robust data, evidence-based policy, engagement with communities, and knowledge-sharing to deliver solutions that work, now supporting cities around the world.

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From Bogotá to Paris, Rio de Janeiro to Sofia, cities across the world are adopting and expanding clean air zones inspired by the success of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). What began as a bold intervention to tackle toxic air pollution in the UK capital has become a global model for how cities can cut emissions, protect public health and improve daily life for millions of people.

About the C40 Clean Air Accelerator

The C40 Clean Air Accelerator supports cities to implement ambitious, evidence-based policies that rapidly reduce air pollution while improving public health, climate resilience and quality of life.

By signing the Accelerator, cities commit to advancing action on clean air and gain access to:

- A global network of cities sharing knowledge and best practice on tackling air pollution.
- Technical support from C40's air quality experts and leading city practitioners.
- Air quality modelling tools and associated training materials.
- C40's online library of international best practices, tools and learning resources.

The Accelerator has now been adopted by 51 cities worldwide. Since 2018, signatory cities have collectively achieved:

- A 6% reduction in PM2.5 pollution.
- An 11% reduction in NO₂ pollution.
- More than 21,000 lives saved from air pollution.
- Nearly 240,000 years of life gained.
- More than 48,000 cases of childhood asthma were prevented.
- An estimated USD 47 billion in economic benefits.

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About Sarajevo

Sarajevo is a signatory to the [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy \(GCoM\)](#).